

RAID U. S. RED CROSS OFFICE IN RUSSIA

Bridgeport Evening Farmer

VOL. 53—NO. 303

BRIDGEPORT, CONN., MONDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1917

PRICE TWO CENTS

RUSSIA RELEASES AND ARMS GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR

Probe Of Building Progress

Senate Commerce Committee Hears That Shipping Program Has Acquired 18.2% of Completion Up to December First.

Washington, Dec. 24.—The government's ship building program on Dec. 1 was 18.2 per cent. on its way to completion as disclosed today in an analysis of statistics supplied by the shipping board to the Senate commerce committee investigating progress of the work.

The program, calling for 8,346,408 tons of shipping, is divided as follows:

Wood and composite vessels, 437 of 1,551,940 tons, 10 per cent. completed; requisitioned steel ships, 431 of 3,054,000 tons, 33 per cent. completed; contract steel ships, 527 of 3,635,400 tons, 4 per cent. completed.

The percentage of completion given, does not take into account the construction of new ship yards in which many of the vessels will be built, or work done toward obtaining engines, boilers and other equipment. Of 279 wooden hulls contracted for, 104 have been laid for 184, of which 138 were laid down in yards which did not exist when the contracts were let. The wooden hulls were ordered from 78 yards, of which 51 have been built from the ground up since the contracts were let. The percentage of completion of wooden hulls figuring on the entire program, which included hulls on which construction has not started, is 9 per cent.

Of 54 composite ships for which contracts were let, 12 on Dec. 1 were 20 per cent. completed. The contracts went to four ship yards, three of which did not exist when the contracts were made. The three yards virtually have been completed and they will begin construction of ships within a few weeks.

Eleven keels for steel ships have been laid in new yards. Contracts were let for steel ships to 22 yards, of which 20 are new. The percentage of completion of the steel program, 4 per cent., does not include the construction of the new yards.

Of the ships contracted for four have been launched, two steel and two wooden.

KILLED MAILING XMAS POSTCARDS TO HIS FRIENDS

Alighting from a trolley car on Barnum avenue, between Central and Mill Hill avenues, with the intention of dropping a batch of Christmas cards and letters into a mail box at the corner, Leonard Matherbe, of Park avenue, Stratford, started to cross the street in front of another car, at 6:45 o'clock this morning, and was run over and killed outright.

The man's body was almost cut in two, and when taken from underneath the wheels was horribly mangled. The emergency hospital was notified and Dr. Frank E. Gavlus hurried to the scene, but finding the victim dead, turned the body over to the undertaking firm of Buckley, Mullins & Cullinan.

Members of the dead man's family were communicated with, their address being found in the envelopes in Matherbe's pockets, and they identified the remains.

It is believed that the man failed to see the second car following the first, and waiting until that from which he had alighted had passed, walked directly into the path of the other. The second car was operated by Motorman Patrick Kennedy, and was in charge of Conductor Patrick Goss.

A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE

The day following the all-night gun battle, which raged about Baby Doll's protected vice den in Water street, and in which one man was murdered, County Commissioner Ballard, political lieutenant of John T. King and an appointee of the latter made the following statement:

"As a matter of fact John T. King wrote me a letter two months ago ordering Baby Doll's establishment to be immediately closed."

The following excerpt is taken from an interview given to a local newspaper yesterday by John T. King, regarding the operation by Baby Doll of the Water street resort:

"As a matter of absolute truth I do not know this Baby Doll, never knew where his place was located and never had any occasion to inquire about it."

CUMMINGS WILL NOT ACT BEFORE NEXT THURSDAY

William "Baby Doll" Thomas will enjoy his Christmas dinner tomorrow as a guest of Sheriff Simeon Pease at the county jail and will eat undisturbed by any thought of arrest on a bench warrant for murder under the finding of Coroner J. J. Phelan, which was made public Saturday. Thomas will partake of the dinner which will be served all of the 260 or more prisoners.

Judge Gardiner Greene, who is presiding at the December term of the Superior Court, has adjourned that court until Thursday morning, and no action by the State's Attorney, Homer S. Cummings, may be expected before that time.

Coroner Phelan heard a large number of witnesses and the testimony of many of them is voluminous. Transcription by George S. Hawley, court stenographer, who took the testimony, will take considerable time, and it is believed the State's Attorney will not act until he has had a chance to look over this evidence.

TWO MEN KILLED WHEN AUTO SKIDS IN ICY ROADWAY

Westerly, R. I., Dec. 24.—Ephraim Williams of New York, and H. Clyde Barber of Westerly, were instantly killed about 6:30 this morning when the automobile of Mr. Williams, which he was driving, skidded and overturned at an icy spot in the road two miles east of Hopkinton.

Mr. Williams was a native of Stonington, 42 years old, a graduate of Princeton, and he had been a practicing attorney in New York for some years. Mr. Barber was the son of Winthrop W. Barber of Westerly.

CREW OF FORMER KERENSKY SHIP MUTINY ON SEAS

A Pacific Port, Dec. 24.—The Russian freighter Shilka, in port here, left Vladivostok, Nov. 24 as a "Kerensky ship," but when a few days out the crew mutinied and took control, declaring for the Bolshevik regime. The wireless operator attempted to send out word of the mutiny and the sailors prepared to shoot him, but changed their minds.

Before the real identity of the ship was learned members of the crew attended L. W. W. meetings here, it is said. The immigration authorities probably will take charge of the ship today. It was pointed out that she came into port with the men in command claiming allegiance to the Bolshevik government, which has not been recognized by the United States, and that this may cause the temporary internment of the vessel.

THE WEATHER.

Connecticut: Light local rains and snow tonight; Tuesday, partly cloudy, colder in the afternoon; fresh south winds, becoming northwest.

SAYS SPOUSE DREW MONEY AND SKIPPED

Alleging that her husband drew money from the Union Savings bank of Danbury deposited by him as trustee for her, and then left for parts unknown, Mrs. Rose Bohl of Danbury has filed suit in the Common Pleas court against her husband, Joseph Bohl, and the Union Savings bank. Decree ordering the bank to pay the remainder of the money over to her, or to make the deposit remaining stand in her name without limitation is claimed.

Mrs. Bohl alleges that they were married in 1873, and that at various times from March, 1910, to August, 1916, she gave her husband sums of money, amounting in all to \$1,234.87 to deposit for her in the Union Savings bank of Danbury. He did deposit the money in his name "Joseph Bohl as trustee for Rose Bohl."

On August 8 Joseph Bohl deserted his wife, according to her claim, but October 8, 1916, he went to the bank with the pass book and drew out \$800. Then he left for parts unknown. There is now a balance of \$709.34 which Mrs. Bohl wants transferred to her account.

SHOOTS FRIEND AND STEALS \$2; VICTIM'S STORY

Bleeding profusely from three bullet wounds in his chest and back, William Bobetes, a Greek, living at 14 Bank street, staggered up to the front door of Dr. E. H. J. Hennessey's home in Stratford, shortly after 2 o'clock this morning, and arousing the physician from his sleep, told him that he had been shot by a friend.

Dr. Hennessey gave the man emergency treatment, and then took him in his own automobile to the Bridgeport hospital, where Bobetes is now in a serious condition. His wounds are not dangerous, but it is feared that complications may set in, and there is doubt as to the man's recovery.

Bobetes was able to give only a disconnected story of what had happened, telling that late last evening he had gone out with a friend, William Armeses, for a walk. Somehow they got far out into Stratford, he says, and there Armeses attacked him.

He claims that Armeses fired three times with a .22 calibre revolver and that after the first shot struck him in the chest he turned and started to run. Armeses, he said, then fired the two other shots, which lodged in the fleshy portion of his back. Bobetes fell to the ground and while there his story goes, Armeses searched his clothing and robbed him of \$2, all the money he had about him. The assailant then fled. No trace of him has since been found.

CENSORSHIP OF FOREIGN MAILS IS NOW IN FORCE

Washington, Dec. 24.—Censorship of foreign mail under the trading with the enemy law now is in full force under a committee on which the post office, war and navy departments, the war board and the commerce board are represented.

The board plans to carry on the work with as little interference to legitimate correspondence as is possible. The work of organization was begun on Nov. 1 and at the request of the government the news was not published at that time. The government now has withdrawn its request for secrecy.

The board is in close co-operation with the British and French censorship. It will combine with censorship of foreign mails the present censorship of wireless and cables.

HALIFAX DEAD 1,158.

Halifax, N. S., Dec. 24.—The total identified dead from the Halifax disaster now number 854 and unidentified dead 304, making a total of 1,158 bodies recovered. Fifty-one bodies were buried today.

NO FARMER TOMORROW.

In accordance with its annual custom the Farmer will not publish an edition tomorrow.

Xmas At Home And In Service

Bridgeporters at Camp Devens and "Over There" Are Well Taken Care of; First War Christmas in America.

After an eventful and prosperous year, tinged with the colors of war, Bridgeport today settled down to experience its first war Christmas since the Spanish-American war in 1898. More than 5,000 homes are saddened by the absence of the Bridgeporters who have heeded the duty call, many of whom are in actual conflict with the enemy abroad. Prayers for these patriots were said in the churches yesterday and will be repeated in some tomorrow.

Few Bridgeport soldiers and sailors were fortunate enough to enjoy another Christmas with their folks, but the government aided by the Red Cross, Masons, Knights of Columbus, Benevolent and Protective, order of Elks and other organizations, will make the day as homelike as possible for the boys in camp and on the high seas. Bridgeport fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers and sweethearts need not worry about their loved ones at Camp Devens, because they will have a little celebration all their own and the government has assured that all gifts sent to the camp will be distributed as speedily as possible.

Every hut in the huge cantonment at Ayer, Mass., is trimmed with decorations appropriate for the season and a menu better than many would get in their own homes has been prepared. Entertainment and exercises of various sorts will be provided and everything within the government's power is being done to make the camp as Christmas-like as possible.

Spirit of the season will be injected by army officers and workers of the Y. M. C. A. and Red Cross and the choicest smokes from scores of donors will help the boys while away the day. The spirit of war prevails and the boys are set on getting "over there" and "finishing things up," so that they might enjoy the next Christmas at their homes.

The municipal celebration will be held as usual at 6 o'clock this evening, weather permitting, and Mayor Clifford B. Wilson will speak a few words in remembrance of Bridgeport's soldiers and sailors.

Five hundred poor children were made happy today when the Arab patrol, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, played Santa Claus to them at the Masonic temple on Broad street. Each child was presented with a box filled with useful gifts, including wearing apparel, candy and a toy.

Fred Atwater, president of the Pyramidal patrol, acted as Santa Claus and distributed the gifts from a huge Christmas tree, which stood in the center of the hall. The children were notified to be on hand at 1 o'clock, but there were several hundred in line before noon.

Postmaster Charles F. Greene will take care that every Christmas parcel, letter and card, will be delivered and deliveries will continue tomorrow until every place has reached its proper destination. The hours tomorrow will be from 8 a. m. to 10 a. m.

Inmates of the Hillside Home will be made happy by the usual Christmas celebration tonight and tomorrow. A large Christmas tree has been provided and each of the 185 inmates will be remembered with some gift, which will be distributed by a real imitation "Santa Claus."

FALSE ALARM, NO FIRE.

A false alarm from Box 82 summoned firemen and apparatus to the corner of Hall street and North Washington avenue, at one o'clock this afternoon. It is believed that steam issuing from the Connecticut Breweries was mistaken for passers-by, who turned in the alarm.

LIBERATED TEUTONS IN DROVES RUSH TO PETROGRAD

London, Dec. 24.—Many news dispatches from Petrograd speak of the supposed impending arrival of the Germans there, which is said to be the general topic of discussion in the city, but everyone seems to have a different version. Many of these stories center around the reported concentration near the capital of a large force of released German prisoners, to whom arms are handed over.

Referring to these rumors, the Petrograd correspondent of the Post says unquestionably thousands of German war prisoners are flocking toward Petrograd from all parts of Russia, but he believes that at present a more important phase of the situation is the active and thorough manner in which the Germans have been pushing trade with Russia since the frontier was opened. He reports that they are making the most of a commercial opportunity such as the world has never seen before, inasmuch as Russian industries are nearly dead and the Germans have no competition.

The Germans have refused to admit M. Zinovieff, a close associate of Nikolai Lenine and other Bolsheviks whom the soldiers' and workmen's delegates wanted to send in to spread their doctrines in the German army. They also declined to admit Trotsky's newspaper printed in German for army propaganda.

London, Dec. 24.—Petrograd dispatches report that attempts are made by the Bolshevik commissaries to negotiate with the Ukrainians for a settlement of the differences which have arisen, and it is also reported that the authorities of the new Ukrainian government are ready to accept proposals looking toward a peaceful arrangement.

The movement for harmony is attributed by the correspondent of the Times to the fact that the growing dangers of the situation are recognized to an increasing extent by the Bolsheviks. For the same reason, he says, they are believed to be inclined to modify their attitude of hostility toward the constituent assembly, which is likely to meet within a week.

RANSACK HEADQUARTERS

London, Dec. 24.—Col. Kolpashnikoff, the American embassy in Petrograd has been assured, is alive but the correspondent of the Morning Post in the Russian capital, says the former agent of the American Red Cross is held in confinement and no one has been able to see him. American Ambassador Francis, the correspondent adds, is preparing a statement on the case.

Col. Kolpashnikoff's flat, the door of which bears a plate with the words "American Mission of Red Cross for Russia," was raided at 2 o'clock in the morning by soldiers, sailors, Red Guards and others. The rooms were ransacked, the officers taking many papers while the men appropriated everything of the slightest intrinsic value. The search ended at 5 o'clock and Col. Kolpashnikoff was taken to the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul.

In releasing the members of the Ukrainian revolutionary staff the Bolshevik government said they had been suspected unjustly of a complicity in a plot to give Gen. Kalédines American Red Cross supplies.

OUR ARMIES ARE THE RESERVES OF VICTORY ASSERTS SEC. BAKER

Washington, Dec. 24.—Germany's newest peace propaganda, viewed as a forerunner to an offensive in the west unless the German-made peace is accepted by the Allies and the United States, "should not for a moment induce us to slacken our preparations for war," says Secretary Baker in his weekly review of the military situation.

"The Germans realize," continues the statement, "that within a short time our armies will form the principal body of fresh strategic reserves remaining available on the battle fields of Europe."

"Our armies constitute the reserves of victory."

The review points out that the fighting morale of Italy may be relied upon no matter how intensive the German peace campaign becomes, and says:

"The Italian theatre once again is the scene of important military activity."

"The enemy's impatience of the delays which have occurred in bringing about the successful penetration of the Italian plain and the overthrow of the Italian armies, has dispatched further forces to the Italian front with a view to achieving a decisive result."

"The Germans are endeavoring to follow the precepts of classic strategy and by a successful enveloping movement effect the destruction of the Italian and Allied forces."

"It would appear that they are anxious to conclude their Italian adventure in a manner similar to the previous campaigns in Russia, Serbia and Rumania, where, as a result of the strategic envelopments gained at relatively small cost, vast tracts of territory were conquered."

"Enemy pressure continues along the entire front."

"Before proceeding with any operations in the west the Germans hope to drive the Italians across the Adige, anticipating that such a reverse would have a very disintegrating influence throughout Italy."

"It is apparent that the Germans have not given up all hope of bringing about a social upheaval in Italy as they did in Russia after their victorious campaigns of 1915."

"No matter how intensive this new subversive propaganda may be, nevertheless we can confidently rely on the fighting morale of the Italian people."

"Along the western front the enemy has continued his harassing raids with a view to keeping the Allied forces on the alert. However, none (Continued on Page 2.)

Financial Grief Of Jos. Lang

Cohen and Lang Become More Involved in Affairs of the Prudential Outfitting Company—Banks Brings Suit.

Further evidence of the financial activities of Joseph Lang and Frank S. Cohen, which in the past few weeks seem to have come to grief, are furnished in the cases of Cosmopolitan Bank of New York against Cohen, Lang and one William Benzel filed in the Superior Court this morning.

Two suits are filed against the three mentioned by the bank alleging non-payment of two notes of \$5,000 each. A third suit in which the plaintiff, Hyman Singer, of New York, claims \$2,500 damages of Cohen alleging that the latter guaranteed the credit of the Prudential Outfitting Co. The latter company recently went into the hands of a receiver and it is alleged that its assets are sadly depleted.

Other events in the financial life of Cohen and Lang recently are the dissolution of the Bridgeport Shoe company in which both were interested and which petitioned the United States district court last week to name a receiver.

Cohen immediately after the financial difficulties of the Prudential Outfitting Co. became acute turned over all his holdings to Judge E. K. Nicholson. When asked regarding this procedure Cohen through one of his attorneys said that he had taken the step to protect his creditors. At the time of the first action Cohen seemed anxious that no publicity should be given the matter and was insistent that the affairs of the Prudential Outfitting Co. were not involved except to the extent of changing the policy of the firm.

The Prudential Outfitting company conducts a chain of stores, furnishing clothing for both men and women on the installment plan. The most recent evidence of the financial standing of the concern is in the fact that Hyman Singer in his suit against Frank S. Cohen of this city claims that he holds an account against the company for \$1,633.12 which he is unable to collect. He asks Cohen who it is alleged guaranteed the account, to liquidate the account.

The two notes on which the suits of the Cosmopolitan bank base their claims were made by the Prudential Outfitting Co. and endorsed by the defendants. It is alleged that the defendants received the proceeds of the note.

BENEDICT SENDS A XMAS MESSAGE TO AMERICANS

Rome, Dec. 24.—Pope Benedict has given to the Associated Press this Christmas message for the American people:

"The holy father sends to the people of America his cordial greetings and prayers that they may take to heart, in this time of strife and suffering, the true lesson of Christmas—the lesson of God's unceasing love for mankind; the lesson of unflinching courage and sacrifice of self."

"More especially he calls upon the little children, to whom this day belongs, to pray with all their hearts to the Babe of Bethlehem that He may protect their loved ones and give back to the world that peace which He came to bring upon earth."

PEACE PROPOSALS XMAS BY KAISER

Rome, Dec. 24.—The report that a new German peace move is at hand is supported by apparently reliable information which has reached high quarters here. It is said that on Christmas day Emperor William will issue a declaration containing peace proposals, but whether explicit conditions of peace may be expected or merely another maneuver intended to throw on the Allies responsibility for continuance of the war cannot be ascertained.